

Two Travel-Related Measles Cases Confirmed in Lower Mainland

Two cases of measles were confirmed in the Lower Mainland (Fraser Health and Vancouver Coastal Health) on February 16. These cases acquired measles while traveling together in Southeast Asia. Both travelled on the same flight during their period of communicability (Air Canada Flight 66 arriving February 11 at 06:55 at YVR). Passengers on the flight have been notified directly. Additionally, people may have been exposed if they spent time in the international arrivals area of YVR (including customs or baggage claims) from 07:30 to 09:30 on February 11. There were no other public exposures, and close contacts are being followed up individually by public health.

There has been a recent increase in measles activity in Canada, primarily Ontario and Quebec (44 cases in 2025 and 146 cases in 2024) and around the world. There have been no other recent cases and no local transmission in B.C. Vaccination is highly protective: One dose efficacy is 85-95% and two-dose efficacy approaches 100%. Given this exposure and the resurgence of measles illness activity in many areas around the world, please remain vigilant for further clinical cases of measles. Key points include:

- Measles initially presents with a **fever, cough, runny nose, and conjunctivitis**. Three to four days after fever onset, an **erythematous maculopapular rash** begins in the hairline, which then spreads rapidly to the face, trunk and limbs. Koplik spots, if present, fade as the rash appears.
- Ask suspect cases about recent travel to areas with ongoing measles transmission (e.g., Europe, Asia, Africa)
- To confirm the diagnosis, collect a **nasopharyngeal** or **throat swab** (using a COPAN red top swab and with universal transport medium) **and urine specimen** (minimum of 5 mL) for measles virus detection by RT-PCR. Where feasible **bloodwork for serologic testing** (measles IgG and IgM; mark as 'ACUTE measles') can also be collected. If applicable, please indicate date of exposure on the requisition.
- **Promptly isolate patients with suspect measles** into a private room. Measles is airborne and highly infectious to those who are not immune. The patient should remain masked in the waiting room and the exam room should not be used for two hours after the patient has left. Suspect cases will need to stay isolated at home until four days after rash onset or until tests come back negative.
- **Immediately notify Public Health of all suspect measles cases** i.e. those born after 1970 who have zero or one previous dose of measles vaccine AND recent exposure to a known case or travel to high risk countries AND compatible signs and symptoms. To report a suspect case, please call:
 - 604-675-3900, Mon-Fri, 08:30 – 17:00
 - 604-527-4893, after-hours and weekend

Please take this opportunity to immunize against measles. Two doses of MMR vaccine are recommended for people born January 1, 1970 or later and for all health care workers born January 1, 1957 or later; those born earlier are considered to be immune. Patients with an uncertain immunization history, or those born pre 1970 (or pre 1957 for health care staff) reporting no history of measles infection may also be immunized. Two doses of MMR vaccine are currently offered to children at 1 year of age and kindergarten entry, and have been part of the routine immunization schedule in BC since 1996. All school-age children from kindergarten to grade 12 were also offered a second dose of measles-rubella vaccine in BC in 1996.

Early vaccination is only recommended for families embarking on international travel. Children who are travelling and have received their first dose of measles vaccine at age 12 months can receive their second dose early (with a minimum interval of 4 weeks after the first dose). Children 6-11 months of age should be offered an early dose of MMR for protection. This dose will not count towards their series and will need to be repeated at 12 months of age. Older children and adults born after January 1, 1970 who are travelling should be offered an MMR if they are not certain they have had two previous doses. Children between one and four years can also get their second dose before travelling internationally.

You can reach a Medical Health Officer at 604.675.3900 | Toll free at 1.855.675.3900
For public health emergencies after hours, contact the Medical Health Officer on call at 604.527.4893

Vancouver Coastal Health Medical Health Officers

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